

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AFTER IRAQ

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## ABSTRACT

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For a short time after the tragic events of 11 September 2001 the United States and its allies in Europe experienced a period of solidarity and oneness unlike any other time since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. However, it was as powerful as it was short-lived. In 2002, as individual nations and international institutions grappled with the nature of the terrorist threat and how to deal with it, a serious rift developed in the transatlantic relationship. As the U.S. prepared for, and then prosecuted the war against Iraq, it alienated many of its European allies, principally led by France and Germany. Their leaders and populations adamantly disagreed with either the use of military force, or the timing and preventive nature of the war. Though the U.S. was staunchly supported by the British government, transatlantic relations plummeted from an all-time high to an all-time low. While some debate continues as to the contributing factors, and certainly there is enough “blame” to ascribe to both sides of the Atlantic, many experts generally agree that the immediate strategic reasons for the rift involve the following aspects of the U.S. strategy for the global war on terrorism (GWOT): the U.S. doctrine of “preventative missions” in the National Security Strategy (NSS), unilateralism (acting without the legitimacy of a United Nations resolution or other multilateral institution such as NATO), and the decision to attack Iraq with the goal of regime change. This strategy has thrown the strategic ends-ways-means out of balance. The purpose of this study is to analyze the viability of this strategy, especially with respect to the implications for future transatlantic cooperation in the war on terrorism. It will review the reasons for European disagreement with the U.S. policy, discuss several options offered by experts for improving transatlantic relations, and finally recommend specific actions to reengage Europe.



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## TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AFTER IRAQ

The United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community in this fight against a common foe. If necessary, however, we will not hesitate to act alone, to exercise our right to self-defense, including acting preemptively against terrorists to prevent them from doing harm to our people and our country.

–George W. Bush

For a short time after the tragic events of 11 September 2001 the United States and its allies in Europe experienced a period of solidarity and oneness unlike any other time since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. However, it was as powerful as it was short-lived. In 2002, as individual nations and international institutions grappled with the nature of the terrorist threat and how to deal with it, a serious rift developed in the transatlantic relationship. As the U.S. prepared for, and then prosecuted the war against Iraq, it alienated many of its European allies, principally led by France and Germany. Their leaders and populations adamantly disagreed with either the use of military force, or the timing and preventive nature of the war. Though the U.S. was staunchly supported by the British government, transatlantic relations plummeted from an all-time high to an all-time low.<sup>1</sup> While some debate continues as to the contributing factors, and certainly there is enough “blame” to ascribe to both sides of the Atlantic, many experts generally agree that the immediate strategic reasons for the rift involve the following aspects of the U.S. strategy for the global war on terrorism (GWOT): the U.S. doctrine of “preventative missions” in the National Security Strategy (NSS), unilateralism (acting without the legitimacy of a United Nations resolution or other multilateral institution such as NATO), and the decision to attack Iraq with the goal of regime change. This strategy has thrown the strategic ends-ways-means out of balance. The purpose of this study is to analyze the viability of this strategy, especially with respect to the implications for future transatlantic cooperation in the war on terrorism. It will review the reasons for European disagreement with the U.S. policy, discuss several options offered by experts for improving transatlantic relations, and finally recommend specific actions to reengage Europe.

Discussions about the current health and future value of the transatlantic relationship are of course nothing novel. The relationship has experienced numerous “crises” throughout its history over foreign policy disagreements that frequently involved the use of force. Among the most memorable are the Suez crisis of 1956, the Vietnam War, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Each incident has led to a continuous evolution of the relationship. As John Peterson points out, the Suez crisis “gave tangible impetus to European integration.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, as the transatlantic



relationship matured, so has the European Union (EU), with the transatlantic relationship alternating between survival and prosperity. But the alliance has not been successful by accident; each step was purposeful. After all, there was the ever present threat of the Soviet Union to tend to, replaced after the Cold War by an arguably more complex and unstable world punctuated by an enlarged NATO and EU, globalization, rogue and failing states, terrorism, and WMD proliferation. After each so-called crisis in the post-World War II period, key leaders on both sides of the Atlantic ultimately decided that a strong continuing relationship would best serve their mutual interests. In the most recent crisis precipitated by the U.S. attack on Iraq, the probability is that this case will not differ from its predecessors, provided the key leaders take positive action to repair, restore, and transform the relationship. It continues to benefit the U.S. to adopt measures that will engage the power of Europe, and vice versa. The combined resources of Europe and the U.S. will increase the means available for fighting shared enemies in the GWOT, thus improving the chances for a quicker and surer victory in the protracted global fight against terrorism.

### **THE EUROPEAN VIEWPOINT**

In order to come to a fuller understanding of the impact U.S. policy has had on the Europeans, and to chart a way forward, it is useful, if not imperative, to take stock of the European viewpoints on the issue. Why are many of the states of Europe, to include two of the major powers, actively opposed to American actions in Iraq? Is it really because Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus, to quote Robert Kagan?<sup>3</sup> Part of the current dismal state of transatlantic relations may be attributed to ideological divisions, compounded by a lack of communication, on both sides of the Atlantic. The current American administration has increasingly been dominated by realist thought with a neoconservative foreign policy, while Europeans tend toward multilateralism and liberal institutionalism. The concept of unilateralism runs counter to the 50-year history of Europeans embracing multilateralism, in the UN and in NATO, and is perhaps best exemplified by the evolution of the six-member European Common Market to the 25-member European Union.

Another generalization about Europe that has some applicability here is Europeans' post-World War II pessimism and wariness of war. Americans are arguably more optimistic that the application of military power can change the world for the better, leaving democracy in its wake. Europeans are more prone to see the use of force as a true last resort, and except for cases of self defense, they believe force should be sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council. In the European mind, force is simply one of a wide range of applications of power that when

combined are much more effective in the post-Cold War international environment. Europeans have a long history in the Middle East that does not support the notion that force can bring democracy to the Arab world. This does not mean that Europeans do not support the vision of a democratic Middle East, only that they disagree with the ways and means of achieving it.<sup>4</sup>

Some experts remind us that at least part of the problem is Europe's reaction to America's hegemonic primacy.<sup>5</sup> The fact is that Americans can go-it-alone (even if that is not the most ideal course of action), and the current administration's propensity to do so frustrates European states that are virtually powerless to affect American foreign policy decisions. Paradoxically, the U.S. does not take into account its relationship with Europe when formulating its foreign policy; however, Europe forms its policies and strategic direction while dealing with the tension that results from having to address new threats to the world, as well as the foreign policies of the post 11 September America.<sup>6</sup> Put another way, the U.S. no longer links its defense primarily to Europe, while Europe still depends on American leadership and military power.<sup>7</sup> This can cause some degree of resentment and perhaps a fear of abandonment.

The European Security Strategy (ESS) agreed upon by EU members on 12 December 2003 provides some insights on a number of these points. It clearly recognizes the dominance of the U.S. as a military actor, but also makes clear the European position that the threats facing the West today cannot be tackled by purely military means. Rather, a "mixture of instruments" is needed including intelligence, police, judicial, military, humanitarian, economic, and political. Displaying the European preference for multilateralism, it cites as an objective "the development of a stronger international society, well functioning international institutions and rule-based international order," beginning with the United Nations, and including such key institutions as the World Trade Organization, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe.<sup>8</sup>

As the western world emerged victorious from the Cold War, the United States continued to grow in power, especially military power and technological prowess, while European armies atrophied as their governments sought a "peace dividend" by diverting scarce resources to expensive social welfare systems and struggling economies. The ESS recognizes this growing capabilities gap between the U.S. and Europe, calling for the establishment of an effective defense agency and the necessity of more resources for defense in order to realize Europe's full potential and to act within "an effective and balanced partnership with the USA."<sup>9</sup> Without a stronger defense identity (capability plus coherence) Europe will continue to be relegated to its role as junior partner on defense issues.

These generalizations have some descriptive utility, but are limited when one considers that while “Europe” as a term can apply to either the European Union or simply the general geographic region, it is not a federation with a single purposeful foreign policy. While it is clear that significant work has been done in this regard, and there are some supranational elements of the EU, it is still revealing to examine the viewpoints of the individual major powers in Europe that are opposed to the U.S. policies in Iraq, namely France, and Germany. These two countries stand in stark contrast to Great Britain who is firmly committed to a close relationship with the U.S. Britain will risk its relationship in Europe before it risks its relationship with the United States<sup>10</sup> and thus has been a staunch supporter in OIF, contributing nearly half its army to the effort. Clearly the “special relationship” is alive and well. Other NATO countries formally supporting U.S. policy on the war in Iraq were Spain, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Denmark, and the Czech Republic. Also, the “Vilnius 10” group of Central and East European (CEE) states agreed to a common declaration of support for U.S. policy.<sup>11</sup> It seems the CEE countries, who suffered under Soviet domination, are grateful to the United States for its lead role in winning the Cold War, and feel obligated to contribute now to the American cause.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, France and Germany are allied in their opposition to the war, but each is opposed to the war for its own reasons, with unique domestic agendas impacting significantly on their respective foreign policies.

#### FRANCE

To many observers it is no surprise that France was, and continues to be, opposed to American military operations in Iraq. However, it is too simplistic to attribute this to a stereotypical Gaullist distrust of American power, although that may be part of it. After all, France showed a great deal of sympathy to the United States after the attacks on September 11, 2001 and offered military support to the Bush administration within days of the attacks.<sup>13</sup> France did not oppose the American attack on Afghanistan, and French soldiers are in Afghanistan today assisting in the efforts to train the Afghan National Army. However, France is generally fundamentally suspicious of unchecked international power (American hegemony) especially when it is unable to influence it. This goes a long way toward explaining the French penchant for multilateralism when it suits them. The French clearly prefer a system in which decisions are made by all parties concerned, and not dominated by the U.S.<sup>14</sup> However, when it came to OIF, unlike his German counterpart who stood in opposition to this particular American policy, French president Jacques Chirac used the war in Iraq to place himself in opposition to the United States itself.<sup>15</sup> Chirac has consistently advocated his vision for a “multipolar world”

(in contrast to a multilateral world) in which the EU would serve as a major international balancing force. Thus, when it came to OIF, Chirac was much more vocal in his efforts to rally the EU to attempt to constrain U.S. power, and he aggressively opposed the U.S. in the U.N. Security Council.<sup>16</sup>

French motivation to oppose the U.S. had other sources as well. By aligning with Germany in opposition to the U.S., Chirac saw an opportunity to increase France's influence in, and leadership of, the EU. It was not a sound strategy, as many of the newest members of the EU staunchly supported the U.S., despite Chirac's efforts to bully them.<sup>17</sup>

## GERMANY

A long-standing ally since the United States supported Germany's inclusion in NATO, this marks a rare moment in which a post-World War II German government has defined itself in opposition to the United States in such a dramatic way on a key issue. The staunch vocal opposition of the German leadership to American military action in Iraq is much more surprising than the French opposition, but perhaps easier to understand (even if difficult for Americans to forgive) as a case of pandering for votes. While Germany shares many of the generalized European arguments for opposing the war, the most vocal is the anti-war, peace-at-almost all-costs attitude shared by the majority of the German population.<sup>18</sup> Given this backdrop, much of the motivation of the German government in opposing the U.S. intervention in Iraq can be attributed to the German chancellor's bid for reelection. Faced with an extremely close race, his anti-American rhetoric played well to German voters, and may have given him the edge he needed to defeat his more conservative, traditionally pro-American opponents.<sup>19</sup>

## CURRENT U.S. POLICY

In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity. People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children—male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor. These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society—and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.

—George W. Bush

In order to analyze the current U.S. policy of taking unilateral pre-emptive action against Iraq, it is useful to use a strategic "ends-ways-means" framework. This will help illuminate the

objectives (ends) of the policy, the “how” (ways) of implementing it, and the resources and instruments of power (means) that get the job done.

## ENDS

To analyze the U.S. grand strategy to fight terrorism, one must first review the ends that this strategy is meant to achieve. The epigraph at the beginning of this section is taken from President Bush’s cover letter of the September 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS). This short passage from the NSS clearly reminds Americans of those values that they hold most dear and are rooted in American national heritage dating back to the country’s founding. They are characterized by moral clarity. These manifestations of freedom are exactly what the fundamentalist Islamic extremists hate, and seek to destroy. This is what is at stake in the war on terrorism. To further quote President Bush from the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, “The world must respond and fight this evil that is intent on threatening and destroying our basic freedoms and our way of life...No group or nation should mistake America’s intentions: We will not rest until terrorist groups of global reach have been found, have been stopped, and have been defeated.”<sup>20</sup> Though lofty, the president’s goals lack clarity and precision. Is the objective to eliminate just Al Qaeda, or all terrorist groups in the world, whether or not they threaten the U.S.? And is elimination achievable? Perhaps a better goal would be to marginalize the groups that threaten the U.S. and its allies such that they are rendered ineffective.

## WAYS

Revisiting the Bush NSS, the president states, “We are also guided by the conviction that no nation can build a safer, better world alone. Alliances and multilateral institutions can multiply the strength of freedom-loving nations.”<sup>21</sup> A “safer, better world” necessitates finding a way to eradicate terrorist organizations. The NSS further clarifies that to achieve the goal of defeating terrorism, the U.S. must continue to work closely with allies and friends and enlist the help of the international community. These convictions are also reflected in one of the key priorities of the strategic plan of the U.S. Department of State, “Strengthened Alliances and Partnerships.”<sup>22</sup> This is, of course, not a new strategy. Since the beginning of the Cold War, the U.S. has grown accustomed to working within the framework of alliances and coalitions of friends to achieve its national security objectives.

For the vast majority of the Cold War the transatlantic alliance architecture focused on a fundamentally different threat, a large conventional force on Europe’s eastern border. The Bush administration has underlined on numerous occasions that the combination of terrorism and the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) make for the greatest threat facing Western nations today. The proclivity of terrorists to use WMD (should they be able to get their hands on them) and the uncertainty of the time and location of their use make this a particularly difficult threat to defend against. This, and the global nature of the current threat, call into question alliance constructs and norms established to counter a much different threat now 15 years in the past. Thus, the Bush NSS makes a compelling case for anticipatory self-defense, in other words, preemptive attacks.<sup>23</sup>

On 14 September 2001, President Bush remarked in a speech at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C., just three days after the horrific attacks on America, "The conflict was begun on the timing and terms of others. It will end in a way, and at an hour, of our choosing."<sup>24</sup>The "way" and "hour" seems to be the rub where the stated administration desire to work with other nations comes into conflict with the policy of preventive war since there is very little agreement between the European nations and the United States about where and when to strike, or even if the military option is appropriate and viable. In the case of Iraq, the strategy of preventive war outweighed the administration goal of working with allies. However, given the apparent lack of effort on the part of the Bush administration to persuade its European allies, the near-unilateral nature of U.S. actions seemed to be by preference. The administration made it clear that it was prepared to act alone. Given the NSS guidance from the president to work with allies, one wonders whether that guidance is only rhetorical window dressing, intended to placate or at best be selectively implemented. While we are frequently reminded by the administration that the war in Iraq was (and still is) supported by a "coalition-of-the-willing," America's only real major combat partner was the United Kingdom (even though the war was not popularly supported by the British), and the coalition was distinguished more by who is not supporting it.

## MEANS

What "means" then are at the disposal of the Americans to accomplish, near single-handedly, the monumental task of bringing peace to Iraq, rebuilding infrastructure and institutions, and securing a democratic government? As the richest nation in the world, with by far the most powerful military, there can be no doubt that the United States possesses the resources to see this endeavor through to success. Even though the military is the primary means through which the U.S. is achieving its objectives, the diplomatic, economic and informational power of the U.S. is immense, and certainly sufficient to achieve the administration's objectives. But possession of the resources does not necessarily equate to a

willingness to spend. It is not certain whether the will of the American people is sufficient to support the administration as the war continues in Iraq (and Afghanistan) over what promises to a much longer and more costly fight than predicted prior to the onset of hostilities. Additionally, as the operational tempo of the military remains high, as monetary costs mount, and as the equipment ages prematurely or is lost, the ability and will of the administration to resource wars against other states supporting terrorists, such as Syria or Iran, diminishes.

## ANALYSIS

Summarizing the Bush administration's grand strategy in the war on terrorism, the *means* employed thus far are almost exclusively military, measured in the lives and treasure of Americans. The *way* they are employed can be described as unilateral preemption, to achieve the *end* of defeating terrorism, and securing and expanding political, economic, and social reforms. Given this strategy, it is safe to assume that the ends are generally non-negotiable, especially those based on defending American core beliefs and enduring principles. The "way" of conducting this war on terrorism, specifically OIF, is definitely a point of contention with many European allies, and as mentioned above, has had a divisive effect on the transatlantic relationship. But does it matter? Does the U.S. need Europe's help in the global war on terror? Can the United States, should the United States, continue to go-it-alone (and pay-it-alone), thus remaining unrestrained to decide at will where and when to strike its enemies next?

The answers lie in the discussion of means. This third leg of the ends-ways-means "stool" is where the Bush administration incurs the greatest risk. The administration's penchant for unilateralism comes with an increased price tag measured in lives lost, dollars spent, and the diversion of resources from other programs or other facets of the war on terror such as homeland defense. America's military strength gained quick success in the first phases of the war, achieving "regime change" relatively easily. But the subsequent tasks of rebuilding Iraq, establishing democratic institutions and training Iraqi security (police and military) forces, all while fighting a mounting insurgency, is resulting in a time consuming, resource intensive, and deadly mix. The loss of American lives, while not high by historical standards, is nonetheless magnified in the information age where the media brings daily news of the deaths of American Soldiers and Marines into every American household. The cost to American taxpayers is fast approaching the 100 billion dollar mark, threatening to exceed 200 billion over the next year.<sup>25</sup> The repetitive and frequent deployment of soldiers and marines is stretching the military, requiring its leaders to seek additional manpower from Congress through end strength plus ups and increased Reserve Component activations. Perhaps the Bush administration believes it

can continually call on the vast resources of the United States to keep the “means leg” in balance, but not without the risk that eventually the will of the American people will wane, especially in the case of a limited protracted war in a distant land. It also does not help the administration garner support when the reason given by the administration for going to war in the first place - to deny the Iraqi regime the use of the WMD (or the ability to supply those weapons to terrorists) they allegedly possessed - was found unsubstantiated.

There is a reason the Bush administration coined the term Global War on Terrorism. It is indeed global: the European Security Strategy, and well as the Bush NSS recognize a shared threat. However, the burdens of providing the means to wage this war have not been shared, with some notable exceptions. From a U.S. perspective, the first two campaigns of this war, OEF and OIF, were waged largely on the backs of the American taxpayer and the lives of courageous American Soldiers, which raises some questions of fairness.

What then is a president to do? Bringing the potential power of Europe to bear in this war would be a good place to start, and reason enough for explaining why it is crucial that the transatlantic relationship remain healthy and available for the present and future fights. Europe is second only to the U.S. in the means at its disposal. Even though characterized by a capabilities gap with the U.S., the combined military strength of the European states is substantial enough, and the economic and other elements of power at their disposal are also considerable. If these states were willing to share the burdens of the war on terrorism, then the U.S. would incur much less cost and risk as some of it is shifted to its allies. As additional means are placed at the collective disposal of a broader and deeper coalition, the resulting power may actually broaden the options available to America, as opposed to limiting them as feared by the Bush administration.

#### **OPTIONS FOR REPAIRING THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP**

President Bush says it best in his NSS, “There is little of lasting consequence that the United States can accomplish in the world without the sustained cooperation of its allies and friends in Canada and Europe.”<sup>26</sup> A number of experts in transatlantic relations agree, have voiced their concern about the current rift in the alliance and have proposed solutions to the problem. All believe that some form of a return to engagement with Europeans that gets Europe more involved in the war on terrorism will ultimately help achieve mutual goals in the GWOT.

In Congressional testimony, John Hulsman from the Heritage Foundation sees opportunity for the American administration faced with a Europe divided over whether to support or challenge the United States. He terms his proposal “cherry-picking:” engaging individual



European states on a bilateral and case-by-case basis. This is a realist and traditional policy, focused on the national interests of each country, which continues to advocate “coalitions-of-the-willing.” This is essentially the current Bush Administration policy. According to Hulsman, dealing with “Europe” as an intergovernmental entity only has some validity when considering the European Union (EU). But the EU, while it may voice the rhetoric of unity, in fact speaks with many voices. Consider the war with Iraq. France, Germany, and Belgium led the opposition to the war, but Britain, Spain (prior to the most recent Spanish elections), Italy, Poland and most central and eastern European governments supported the United States.<sup>27</sup> The difference between the current U.S. policy and Hulsman’s “cherry-picking” is intent, level of effort and NATO involvement. Hulsman advocates keeping NATO as the first recourse, but failing that, realist behavior would dictate that the U.S. persist and proceed country-by-country to persuade individual allied nations to join the coalition. The intent is to reap the benefits of multilateral effort while retaining the ability to act alone if necessary to secure a vital national interest.<sup>28</sup>

The risks in this approach are threefold. One, NATO would lose relevance as the administration quickly defaults to bilateral agreements since only one nation in NATO has to disagree to bog down the alliance. Within its current framework, NATO has become a rather unwieldy and untimely institution for the exercise of power against anything other than a Soviet-like threat. Even in the aftermath of the historical invocation of Article V of the NATO charter in response to the attacks on September 2001, the U.S. did not call on NATO to participate in the attack against the Taliban forces. While this may have been a missed opportunity on the part of the U.S., it seems more likely to have been a decision that reflected the American administration’s lack of confidence in NATO as a truly viable military option. Therefore, cherry-picking would become the norm as the administration attempted to persuade each individual state of the need to act in concert with the U.S. Secondly, cherry-picking also risks failure because the time required to let diplomacy work is not always available in the context of the current threat. In either a retaliatory or preemptive strike, the window of opportunity is not guaranteed to stay open long enough to bring a robust coalition-of-the-willing on-line. Again, the attack on the Taliban in Afghanistan is offered as an example of the relatively short decision cycle necessary to respond effectively to current threats. Lastly, this approach risks dividing Europe even more. It does not capitalize on the combined power of European states. Some would argue that a divided Europe is in America’s interests, since the Europeans would not be able to challenge the U.S. except through their unified efforts. However, this is very short-sighted and does not take into account the fact that on a fundamental level, European values

are not very different from American ideals, and Americans do not stand to gain from a weak Europe.

Robert Hunter, senior advisor to the Rand Corporation, offers another solution. He feels it is well worth the effort to involve its European friends in the war on terrorism through the use of a transformed and modernized NATO, aligned via tight linkages to a new strategic U.S.-EU partnership that brings the non-military elements of power to bear. He rejects Hulsman's idea of using NATO as an American "toolbox" and prefers to update and use the NATO framework, oriented beyond Europe's borders to the Middle East. NATO should still be the indispensable instrument for the use of military power. Europe would, for its part, be required to ante-up and reverse the decline in the respective militaries and be capable of providing a viable military option. U.S. accommodations would include allowing a greater degree of sharing of influence and decision making. But the benefit would be a spreading of the risks and responsibility, along with fewer casualties and reduced expenditures of American taxpayer money. The crux of Hunter's argument is that the diplomatic, economic and informational elements of power are essential to long term success in dealing with Iraq and the GWOT. While he does not discount the use of the military, especially in establishing short term security, his formula calls for a new institution that partners the U.S. with the EU to supplement military power.

The risks in Hunter's approach are essentially the arguments that the Bush administration has invoked to justify going-it-alone. That is the fear that working within an institutional framework would limit the options available to American policy makers. The only real experience to draw from is the NATO engagement in Kosovo, and the lessons learned there showed that it was a decision-making nightmare (especially with respect to targeting) for military leaders and policy makers accustomed to unity of command and a hierarchical structure, not leadership by committee and vote<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, Hunter argues that the U.S. experience in Kosovo (and Bosnia) show that the use of military force was made more palatable and legitimate for the American people by its use within the context of an alliance.<sup>30</sup>

Ronald D. Asmus, senior Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, takes a somewhat different approach to the problem of mending the transatlantic relationship. He clearly supports the contention that this issue is one of the most striking failures of the Bush administration's foreign policy. He contends that the strength of the U.S. alliance with Europe is the reason the second half of the twentieth century was more peaceful than the first half, and that strategic cooperation may again be needed to meet the challenges of a dangerous new era ushered in by the attacks of September 11, 2001. Asmus prescribes 4 steps to "getting back on track." First,

Asmus dismisses the idea of treating Europe as a “toolbox” and instead insists that the U.S. must treat Europe as its partner of choice and make it a top priority to find the common ground on mutual challenges. Second, the administration must reaffirm its support for a “strong, unified, and pro-Atlanticist Europe.” This necessitates reversing the administration’s penchant for dismissing “old” Europe. Such talk and behavior only serves to further divide Europe, and if Europe is to make any kind of meaningful and sustainable contribution to the war on terror, then it will only come from a combined Europe. The third step is the complement to step two: the EU must not pretend that it can or should act as a counterweight to American power, as suggested by French president Jacques Chirac. The basis of such a policy is at its core anti-American, and will only serve to further divide Europe. Finally, the last step is to reinstate the mechanisms for dialogue. When facing the Soviet threat, transatlantic dialogue was both systematic and close though largely dominated by the U.S. Given the complexity and uncertainty of today’s threats and strategic issues, one would think that the situation would call for even better communication and consultation, and perhaps less domination by the U.S. But “the diminished dialogue reflects the Bush administration’s downgrading of the relationship.”<sup>31</sup>

There is little risk in what Asmus is suggesting. His approach is balanced in that it recognizes that Europe has a critical role to play in repairing the damage already done to the transatlantic alliance. Although seemingly simple in its prescription, one could argue that it simply returns the relationship to an ante-bellum status quo. While this may be considered desirable in light of the current state of the alliance, it also may not be sufficient to bring a degree of effectiveness to the alliance in defeating terrorism. Even if the U.S. follows through on Asmus’ steps one, two and four, success may ultimately hinge on a change of administration in one or more of the major powers concerned. President Chirac has not softened his anti-American rhetoric and is very unlikely to change his foreign policy to accommodate the U.S. Germany appears content to be aligned with France, although Schroeder has taken some positive steps recently to mend the German-American relationship. Prime Minister Blair’s power is also tenuous as the British population becomes increasingly anti-war, and as its armed forces become stretched from the frequent deployments. Finally, the Bush administration seems content to continue with current policies. While it is proving costly for the U.S. to bear the brunt of the “phase four” operations while battling insurgents, the president seems to enjoy the free reign on decision making authority with respect to Iraq and is not daunted by rising budget deficits.

## RECOMMENDED POLICY CHANGE

Turning around the current poor state of transatlantic relations is a little like turning around an aircraft carrier at sea. It doesn't happen quickly, and it won't turn "on a dime." As such, "steering corrections" for finding renewed vitality and strength in the transatlantic alliance will be relatively broad, while borrowing from the best ideas of the experts discussed above. Under any of the above three plans for fixing the alliance, all would necessitate giving Europeans some say in the operations in Iraq or future joint transatlantic endeavors.

First, the American president and his administration must show extraordinary international leadership. While it seems too simple to be a policy recommendation, it nevertheless is a necessary first step to start "turning this ship around." Great leaders are able to see their mistakes or wrong turn, learn from them, even occasionally admit them, and then chart a better course. Leadership by declarations such as "either you're with us or you're against us," does not sound like a world leader rallying like-minded peoples to join in a great crusade against a terrible enemy. On the contrary, it takes great communication skills and persuasive powers to influence other states to join in such a difficult and dangerous endeavor as the war on terror. Diplomacy matters. It is still an element of power on which the U.S. should rely. And in practicing diplomacy, words matter. The U.S. should be less dismissive of the Europeans. The problem is that making the case takes time, and is complicated in that any sovereign European state is likely to want some decision making input in any allied endeavor. But borrowing from George Kennan's warning about the Soviet threat, the enemy is patient.<sup>32</sup> The leaders of great powers must be more persistent than their terrorist enemy. They must show the greatness that the world situation now demands, work hard to find common ground in the GWOT, and decide on their mutually agreeable ways to achieve their common ends. For the U.S., this will mean adopting a less unilateral approach and finding a way for Europeans to participate in decision-making and then share in the burdens of executing those decisions.

Second, the U.S. and Europe must aggressively seek to find new and innovative ways to expand cooperation in bringing the non-military elements of power to full effect. While the U.S. administration has been quick to pull the military trigger against the enemy, it will ultimately need to incorporate the full power of its diplomatic, informational and economic elements of power to win this war of ideas. There is already a great deal of discussion in the press and elsewhere about the administration's lack of planning and preparedness to conduct "phase IV" operations – establishing stability and conducting nation building activities – after the U.S. military had defeated and removed the Iraqi regime. Europe has a great deal to offer in this phase of the operation, and both Asmus and Hunter make very good points about this. The

more integrated the U.S. and Europe become in bringing these other elements of power to bear on the enemy, the more likely they will find common ground when it comes to applying military force. A good place to improve is the sharing of intelligence data (within reasonable limits without exposing covert sources). The more the U.S. and Europe operate from a common and detailed perception of the threat, the more likely they will find ways to cooperate to counter that threat. The U.S. administration should also welcome and continue to pursue European assistance in the business of nation-building in Afghanistan and Iraq. While the current European (largely NATO) involvement in Afghanistan is not yet a model for success, it is a start. It will take great leadership to achieve the objectives of establishing security, a viable economy, and a freely elected functioning government. Inventing a new future for Iraq will prove a tougher challenge, but it must be met with an international effort including significant participation from Europe. Rob de Wijk argues for transatlantic security cooperation that is based on a division of labor, allowing the United States to do most of the fighting, while Europeans would be responsible for stabilization and reconstruction. This is based on his accurate assertion that Europe lacks fighting power and interoperability.<sup>33</sup> However, current U.S. policy excludes those European countries that did not fight to liberate Iraq from contracting and contributing to the business of rebuilding Iraq. This policy is short sighted, intended to punish those non-participants, and will not give Iraq its best chance for establishing a free democratic government and functioning economy. Europeans have much to offer, and allowing them to participate gives them a stake in Iraq's future. One may question whether awarding contracts to the French, for example, poses too great a domestic political risk. But waging war without allies and without a solid plan to win the peace is also a risk. The more deeply other powers are invested in Iraq's future, the more interested they will be in regional stability and security, especially with respect to troublesome neighboring countries, such as Syria or Iran.

Finally, in order to prepare for future operations, the U.S. should prepare to deal more and more with the EU as a collective representative of the states of Europe. The U.S. would be best served by encouraging the process whereby European unity is consolidated, and further identified by a common foreign and security policy. The U.S. need not fear a strong united Europe as a balancing constraint against the U.S. as President Chirac has suggested. Just the contrary, when it comes to core values and a common enemy, Europeans are like-minded with Americans (including the French). A strong unified Europe will only bolster a combined effort to defeat the perpetrators of terrorism. Where does NATO fall into this equation? As Ronald Asmus has suggested, they can be mutually supportive. If the EU ever fully develops a military capability, it may render NATO irrelevant, but more likely it will operate as a complement to

NATO. This can and should be a positive development, especially if the EU military capability is robust and interoperable with the U.S.

The U.S. and Europe have been here before. The history of the alliance is characterized by burden shifting, sub-optimizing of contributions, and heated debates. Yet it also is characterized by shared core values, peaceful negotiation, and victory (Cold War and Kosovo). 16 years after the end of the Cold War it survives intact, its membership growing with new states in search of collective security. After witnessing the terrible attack on the U.S. of 11 September 2001, the transatlantic alliance unanimously decided that it now had an enemy as potentially as dangerous as the old Soviet threat, and the GWOT was begun. The moral clarity of America's purpose in this war has seldom been more evident. But by leaving key transatlantic allies on the sidelines, the Bush administration's strategy for winning the global war on terrorism accepts too much risk in the "means" part of the ends-ways-means formula. It clearly lacks the quality of bringing to bear the power of its European allies to share in this common cause against a common threat that possesses considerable destructive potential. The result is a policy that is at best inefficient and expensive for Americans, and at worst may not achieve its strategic objectives in the long term. To change will require great statesmanship, such as the world has seen in past conflicts against terrible enemies. It will require the US to be less unilateral and aggressively collaborate with Europe in bringing all elements of power to bear, especially non-military. Finally the U.S. will need to learn to how to work bilaterally with the EU, and encourage that organization to develop and mature as an equal partner of the U.S. The war on terrorism is, after all, global, and the U.S. should not be playing the part of Atlas in this struggle against the perpetrators of terrorism.

WORD COUNT=6883



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Poland, Italy, Spain and a handful of other countries (many from Eastern Europe) also supported the U.S., but in a much less robust manner, arguably with only symbolic effect.

<sup>2</sup> John Peterson, "All in the (Dysfunctional) Family?," *Current History*, vol. 103, No. 676, November 2004, p. 357.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley Hoffman, "The Crisis in Transatlantic Relations," in *Shift or Rift: Assessing U.S.-EU Relations after Iraq*, ed. Gustav Lindstrom (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2003), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Justin Vaisse, "Making Sense of French Foreign Policy," available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/fellows/vaisse20030702.htm>>; Internet; accessed 10 Dec 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Walt, Kenneth Waltz, and John Mearsheimer are among these experts.

<sup>6</sup> Nicole Gnesotto, "EU, US: Visions of the World, Visions of the Other," in *Shift or Rift: Assessing U.S.-EU Relations after Iraq*, ed. Gustav Lindstrom (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2003), 22.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>8</sup> "A Secure Europe In A Better World: European Security Strategy," 12 December 2003; available from <<http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2005; p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> John Peterson, "All in the (Dysfunctional) Family? Transatlantic Relations after Iraq," *Current History* 103, no 676 (Nov 2004): 355.

<sup>11</sup> Robert E. Hunter, "Europe's Leverage," *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2003-04): 109.

<sup>12</sup> Hoffman, 17.

<sup>13</sup> Guillaume Parmentier, "Diverging Versions: France and the United States After September 11," in *Visions of America and Europe*, ed. Christina V. Balis and Simon Serfaty (Washington D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies), 117.

<sup>14</sup> Vaisse

<sup>15</sup> Doug Bereuter and John Lis, "Broadening the Transatlantic Relationship," *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no 1 (Winter 2003-04), 148. 147-162.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.



<sup>18</sup> "Transatlantic Trends 2004," The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Available from <[http://www.transatlantictrends.org/apps/gmf/ttweb2004.nsf/0/D154546D26BFF48B85256F0900669ED1/\\$file/Newest+Report.pdf](http://www.transatlantictrends.org/apps/gmf/ttweb2004.nsf/0/D154546D26BFF48B85256F0900669ED1/$file/Newest+Report.pdf)>; 25-26.

<sup>19</sup> "Europe, Playing All Sides; Germany's Foreign Policy," *The Economist*, Vol. 368, Iss. 8343 (27 September 2003), 40.

<sup>20</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002), 1.

<sup>21</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002).

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of State. *FY2004-2009 Department of State and USAID Strategic Plan*. 23 May 2003. available from <<http://www.state.gov/m/rm/rls/dosstrat/2004/23503pf.htm>>; Internet; accessed 15 September 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 15.

<sup>24</sup> George W. Bush, "President's Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance," 14 September 2001, available from <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010914-2.html>>; accessed 10 Dec 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Hannah K. Strange, "Report: The 'Real' Costs of the Iraq War," *The Washington Times*, 1 July 2004; available from <<http://washingtontimes.com/upi-breaking/20040701-024236-4063r.htm>>; Internet; accessed 5 March 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 25.

<sup>27</sup> Congress, House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Europe, *Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership: A View from the United States*. Testimony of Hulsman, John C before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on International Relations, 108th Cong., 1st Sess., 11 June 2003, 35.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>29</sup> Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001) xix.

<sup>30</sup> Robert E Hunter, "A Forward Looking Partnership," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no 5 (September/October 2004): 15.

<sup>31</sup> Ronald D Asmus, "Rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October, 2003); available from <<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20030901faessay82502/ronald-d-asmus/rebuilding-the-atlantic-alliance.html>>; accessed 23 September 2004.

<sup>32</sup> George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conflict," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947): 581-582.

<sup>33</sup> Rob de Wijk, "European Military reform for a global Partnership," *The Washington Quarterly* 27:1 (Winter 2003-04): 197.



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